



DDG-31



DDG-73



DD-936



DD-341



USS Decatur Association Newsletter

Spotlight on Decatur Sailors

DDG-31's Joe Whetstone (BTCM retired) Cont'd



January -- 2016 -- Issue 8



I was involved with one event that gave me great pleasure! I was approached by the manager for the local Travelodge Motel willing to sponsor 25 wounded veterans for a weekend in Galesburg. This would be celebrated as a very patriotic event that would be supported by the entire community. I arranged for 25 wounded veterans that could travel that were being treated at the Great Lakes Naval Hospital. The Mayor of Sheboygan made the travel arrangements and accompanied the veterans who were met at the train station by local car dealers with convertibles so they could become part of a parade being held in their honor. Entertainment was provided

by the local community and they were welcomed into their homes and were all treated like royalty. This event was covered in the local news and on radio/TV in the surrounding area and was called "Show Your Colors". Needless to say, it turned out to be a huge success.

This recruiting assignment would be my only tour of shore duty during my Naval Career. In November 1968 I received orders back to "Sea Duty" to report to the USS Decatur, DDG 31 that was stationed in Long Beach, CA that included a detour to San Diego, CA for training. On 28 December 1968 I reported to NAVDEVTRACEN in San Diego

where I took the 1200 PSI Boilerman Course. After training in March of 1969, I reported for duty on board the USS Decatur stationed in Long Beach, CA.

As a lesson in history, prior to the Decatur becoming a DDG she was known thru-out the fleet as the USS Decatur DD-936.

. On May 06 1964 the Decatur received serious topside damage due to a collision with the USS Lake Champlain CVS-39 when the Decatur suffered a steering casualty causing her to run under the carrier's bow overhang that knocked off the Decatur's mainmast exposing the engineering spaces to the elements in the process.

The Decatur was decommissioned and tied up alongside the pier but unfortunately, very limited protection was provided for the engineering spaces from the elements of nature. The piping insulation just sucked up moisture from the snow and rain allowing the rust to permeate right through the pipe wall on piping in the engineering spaces causing numerous severe pipe ruptures to occur during service after the ship was put back into commission. The Decatur was selected to undergo an extensive conversion of its weapons capability, for example the installation of the ASROC (Anti-Submarine Warfare Missile Launcher) and she was re-commissioned and now designated as DDG-31.

When I arrived there was no Chief BT onboard as he had been transferred prior to my arrival. MMCS Cliff Dyer had been monitoring B Division during the interim. Due to the engineering setup in the fireroom made the working conditions very difficult for the BT's that were expected to operate and maintain the boilers and associated equipment. You had to have had the opportunity to have served on other ships to realize that BT's on the Decatur faced a far greater challenge than BT's faced on other ships under similar situations. Believe me when I say that the BT's on the Decatur were a special group of unsung hero's.

We made two cruises to the Far East that included the normal Ports-of-Call including several trips to Japan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and naturally our old standby, Subic Bay, Philippines. One major highlight was when we made a trip "down-under" to Australia. This being my second time crossing the Equator gave me the privilege to participate in the initiation as a Shellback. My role during the initiation was playing the role of the Chaplain stationed at the "Dunking Pool" where the slimy Pollywogs were dunked and thus became Shellbacks.

In August 1972, I reported for duty onboard the USS Tripoli LPH-10 that was en-route coming back from the Far East and returning to her homeport in San Diego, CA. My arrival onboard was rather grim since the BT Chief that would normally be in charge had hung himself in the "uptakes". Not a very pleasant reception. Soon after my arrival onboard the Tripoli, I was assigned as the Command's Senior Enlisted Advisor (Command Master Chief). Prior to this assignment I served as the "B" Division Officer and 3-M Coordinator for the Engineering Department. While serving on the Tripoli we made an extended tour to the Far East where a majority of our time was concentrated between Subic Bay and Vietnam. The Tripoli played a crucial role acting as host to the peace negotiations that were being held each day between the US and North Vietnam. In the early part of 1973 the Tripoli headed for Haiphong for operation "Endsweep" where helicopters from the Tripoli were busy deactivating mines in the harbor and where extensive negotiations continued with North Vietnam. Operation "Endsweep" was set up primarily for the clearing of U.S. mines in RVN waters, particularly Haiphong. This was the last remaining precondition prior to the release of the Prisoners of War still being held by North Vietnam.

In final analysis, the Navy was extremely good to me! I'm not aware of any organization that would take in a kid with only an 8th grade education and then take the time to train him for the life and conditions that he will be expected to face as the Navy has done with me. The main reason that I left the Navy when I did was that I felt that I was not the type of individual who would be happy or comfortable serving his country as a Command Master Chief Petty Officer. The problem is that when you are assigned as a Command Master Chief your entire life changes, you are no longer solving engineering problems but must now deal with problems primarily relating to human relations. My job was now starting to become more political and with the very high profile exposure I was receiving was something that I never was very comfortable with. I felt that I had now reached my "Level of Incompetence". If you read the book "The Peter Principle" by Dr. Lawrence J. Peter, you will understand where I'm coming from.

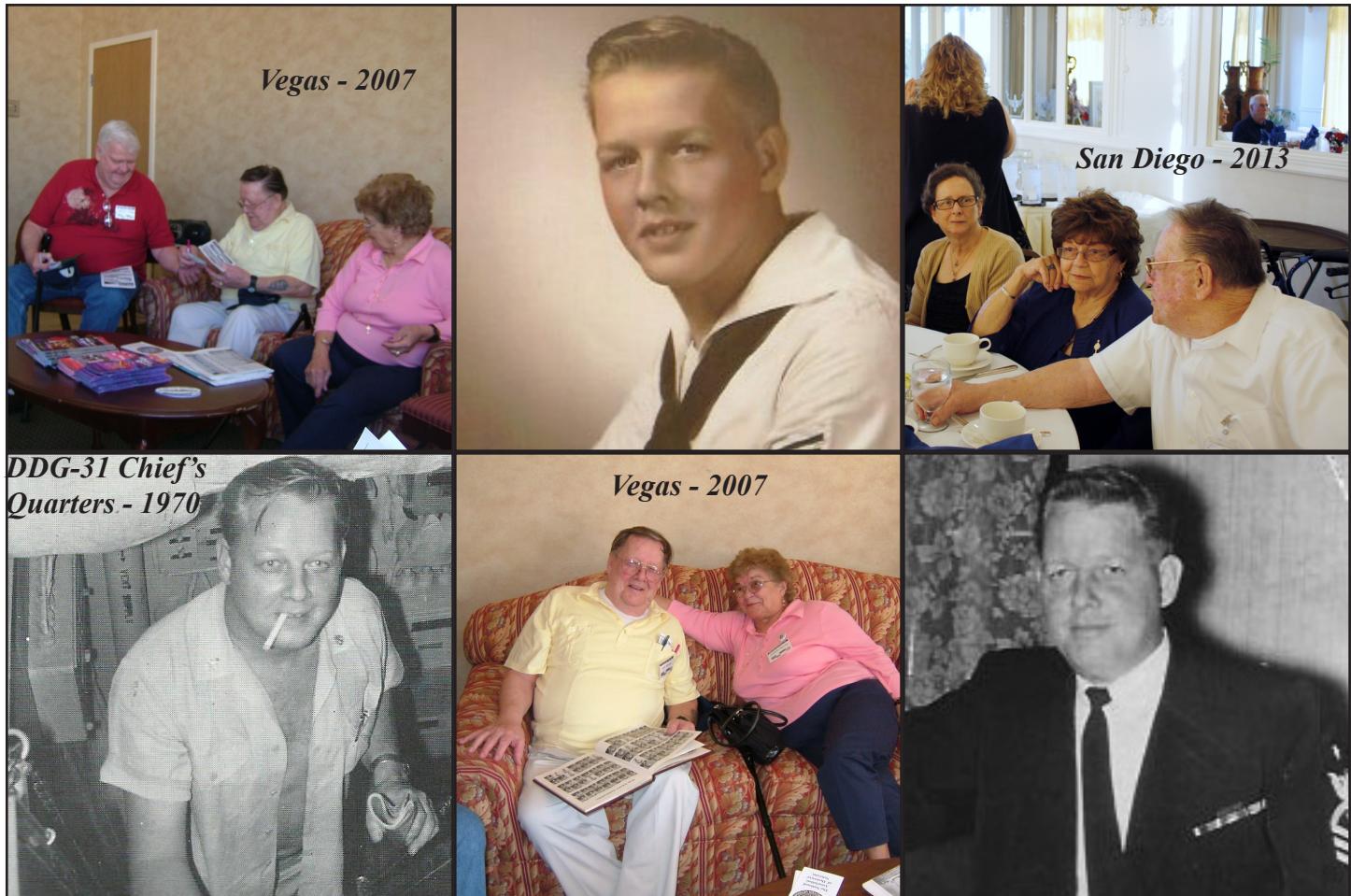
The background that the Navy was very good in providing gave me the opportunity to launch a new career. With “on-the-job” training and my Navy Engineering background plus utilize the GI Bill I managed to pass the required examinations and become a National Board “Authorized Nuclear Inspector” with the following additional endorsements, “Inspection Specialist”, Supervisor” and “Concrete”. I was primarily providing a Third Party Inspection Service for clients who either manufactured products or were actively involved during the actual construction phase of a Nuclear Power Plant of anything related to the Pressure Retaining Process of anything that could possibly contain radioactive materials during the plant operation and storage process. My last two years were spent assisting clients in preparing for the recertification of their Quality Assurance Programs conducted by ASME, The National Board of Pressure Vessel Inspectors, the local Jurisdiction and us (The Authorized Inspection Agency).

In August 1979 I received a job offer from ARAMCO (Arabian and American Oil Company) to work for them on family status. I joined the ARAMCO’s Consulting Services Department in Saudi Arabia and was assigned to the Projects Inspection Division monitoring construction activities of their many construction projects ongoing in Saudi Arabia. We lived in family camps occupied by American employees that were very similar to our military bases, for example Subic Bay, PI except no CPO or EM clubs are provided, you have to provide your own entertainment, which we did! I worked on ARAMCO projects until their mandatory retirement kicked in at the age of 60.

Shortly after my return to the US, I was contacted by H.C. Price to do a short term contract in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska to inspect the application of Fusion Bonded Epoxy (FBE). FBE coating was to be applied on the internal surface of welds for an above ground 24” fuel gas pipeline replacement project with British Petroleum as the proponent. In February 1961, Aramco arranged for me to return to Saudi Arabia on single status by being “seconded” to Parsons to monitor construction activities related to an approximately 100 km 60” Water Injection Supply Pipeline from the Arabian Gulf to the Water Injection Pumping Station located south of Udhailyah. I was next “seconded” to John Brown Engineering & Construction Co. to monitor construction activities on the Central Arabia Projects in the Hawtah Oil Field. I was next “seconded” to Stone & Webster as a Site Superintendent monitoring construction activities in the southern area of the Aramco’s Maintain Potential Projects until December, 1997 when I retired. This completes BTM Whetstone’s biography.



Remembering Jack Myreng (OSCS (ret.))



"A lot of things happened and the places I've been writing my BIO would be like writing a book. I'm originally from Buffalo, NY –

I served aboard six ships in my era of 16 Nov 1951 to 28 Feb 1971 of 20 years with some constructive time in the Navy. I attended most every radar man schools even with instructors and recruit company commanders schools.

My ships starting with the USS Sturtevant DE 239 – USS Mississinewa AO144 – USS Shelton DD790 – USS Piedmont AD18 – USS Galveston CLG 3 and lastly the USS Decatur DDG31.

I went from seaman recruit to now operations specialist senior chief (RDCS). I would have liked to make master chief but kept getting passed but unselectee.

Oh well! I'm turning 82 on June 30."

We lost Senior on: 25 November 2014

2016 Decatur Reunion Particulars

Visit our Web Site

www.ussdecaturassoc.org/ReunionSites.html

Please attend our 2016 reunion in New Orleans, LA. It will begin on 29 September 2016 -- checking out 3 October 2016 (4 nights)...

ALL sailors that served aboard any Decatur are welcome.

Please send a \$40 reunion registration fee to:

**USS Decatur Association (Checks payable to):
P.O. Box 880442
Port St. Lucie, FL 34988**

Please join our USS Decatur Association:
Send \$24 for TWO years of membership (or)
our NEW option of a LIFETIME membership
for \$125 to:

**USS Decatur Association (Checks payable to):
P.O. Box 880442
Port St. Lucie, FL 34988**



Joe Whetstone BTM (ret.).....Pages 1 - 3

Remembering OSCS Myreng.....Page 4

2016 Reunion&2015 Memories....Page 5

Bonnie Deringer's Boot Camp.....Pages 6 - 7

Decatur TravelsPage 8

From our 2015 Reunion in

Branson, MO



Bonnie Deringer's Boot Camp Experiences at Bainbridge, MD

Finally it was beautiful Maryland in the Spring. Lilacs were blooming. The snow and ice were gone. We were all giddy with the end of boot camp finally in sight. Some of the company Chiefs said we had spring fever. I knew I did, and loved it. I felt like I was on a trampoline. On Easter Sunday of 1956, we finally received our "Blue Jackets" with the four gold buttons that we earned by making it near to the end of boot camp. My friend, Kathy Wise and I were so proud to finally receive our Blue Jackets. We attended church Easter Sunday, with our chins and noses in the air in pride. On our upper left sleeve of our Blue Jackets, we had to wear a yellow diamond shaped patch with blue letters on it that read UDT. We didn't know what it meant, and when we asked the Chief's they said it meant Under Water Demolition Team, and we were to tell ever sailor we met that that's what it stood for! We got a lot of hats off and bows and whistles from Sailors, that we saw on a four hour pass in Baltimore. When we told them what the letters stood for, they backed away as if we were unapproachable?

Elvis Presley had taken the world by storm, in the time we had been isolated in boot camp. Kathy and I heard him first on her cousin's car radio in Baltimore. "You Ain't Nothn' But a Hound Dog" blared out at Kathy and I, and we had no idea who we were listening to, nor any idea what he looked like or what the big fuss was about with adults.

I had to go to see the psychiatrist once a week. He was always huddled down in his big black overcoat, and his head stuck out hiding like a turtle. He always glared at me. I answered his questions the best I could, but it seemed nothing I said got through to him, or impressed him. Time was nearing the end of boot camp and I was getting no where in my relationship with this expressionless man. So I began a barrage of insults. I told him the color of the room was that disgusting green color that was all over the place. Why did he have it in his office where he was supposed to treat people's mental illness! There were no pictures, not even of battleships, blowing apart! His office was cold and hard. The furniture was dark, polished and depressing! He was depressing too! I still had no reaction from him. Then, on my final visit, I told him that I didn't like him and unless he was going to find me crazy and unfit for service, I told him to let me out of here! I even put on my glasses with only one lens and poked my finger through the open hole at him! His reaction was still the same, a big nothing! I finally chewed bubble gum and blew a great big pink balloon and sucked it in and snapped it at him. The doctor then got up from behind his desk, took off his overcoat, stood up straight, smiled and thrust his hand out and said, "Miss Matthews, I think you will be a great asset to the Navy and the United States Navy Medical Corps. Congratulations, you have been accepted to corps school, here at Bainbridge. They gave me the privilege of telling you the news.

The Last Class

PROPERTY OF
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF CECIL COUNTY

4-3-1972

WAVES Are Leaving Bainbridge

By Stuart S. Taylor

Bainbridge, Naval Training Center, Md.—The WAVES are leaving Maryland for sunnier climes.

The final 150 young women to train at this Cecil County base for active duty in the Navy arrived last weekend. After they graduate June 9, the Women's Training Command will move to Orlando, Florida.

All of the 6,000 enlisted women in the Navy trained at Bainbridge, which puts about 500 female recruits at a time through a 10-week basic training before they specialize.

The command is leaving the banks of the Susquehanna River for the outskirts of Disney World, not to lure bikini-clad sun-worshippers into the armed forces but because the facilities at Bainbridge are becoming obsolescent, according to the Navy.

2 Other Commands

Many of the 4,000 personnel at the 30-year-old base sleep in "temporary" World War II barracks and dine in mess halls of similar vintage, Cmdr. Raymond C. Lackore,

chief staff officer, said last week.

Bainbridge has lost two smaller commands in recent years. An office that assigned men to bases around the country will complete a move to Washington in July, while a data processing school left two years ago for San Diego.

Commander Lackore said he knows of no plans to close any other Bainbridge operations, which include a training school for nuclear submarine crews, specialized clerical

and radio schools, and a program to prepare selected enlisted men for enrollment in the United States Naval Academy. The base has no ships.

The move of the WAVES, which "has been in the offering for several years," will put "no more than 20 of the 1,000 civilians Bainbridge employs out of work," the commander said.

Basic training for women includes naval history, traditions and weaponry, first aid,

drills, swimming, ecology, grooming and exercises.

But there are no obstacle courses, forced 20-mile marches or night watches like those male recruits must endure, according to Capt. Mary Gore, who heads the women's training program.

"It's not designed to build men," she added, at the risk of a rebuff from the women's liberation movement.

The women go on to specialized training for such jobs as air traffic controller, radio technician, electrician, photographer, medic, clerk and data processor. They do not serve on ships.

Most Are Teen-Agers

Most of the volunteers for the three-year term are teenagers recently out of high school, Captain Gore said. They must be unmarried.

The first enlisted women served during World War II, although the Navy used women as yeomanettes, or clerical helpers, during the first World War. They have been trained at Bainbridge since 1950.

The first class in the new Orlando quarters will report for training July 17.

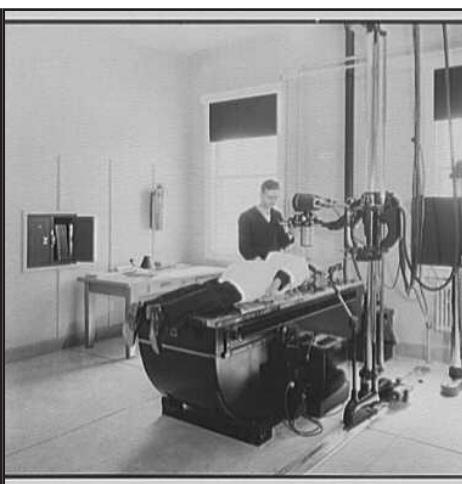
Deadline Is Set For Votes On Best Trash Collectors

April 13 is the deadline for Baltimore householders to vote for their trash collector and street cleaner in a special city-wide election.

City sanitation crews who receive the most citizen votes for excellent performance will get cash awards at the Women's Civic League 23d annual Clean City Award program at 8 P.M. May 4 at City Hall, Board of Estimates Room.

To register a vote, a householder should mail his name and address with identification of the crew to Clean City, American Building, Baltimore 21202 on or before April 13.

Eligible for cash awards from the league are mixed refuse collection crews, street cleaning crews, bulky trash collection crews and hokey cart operators.



Decatur Travels

Send me your Travel pictures wearing your Decatur hat



Dan in Israel